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T H E

Nature and Design

O F

CHRISTIANITY.

Extracted from a late AUTHOR.

2 Corinth. v, 15.

And that he (Christ) died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.

Vers 17.

If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature : old Things are past away, behold, all Things are become new.



GERMANTOWN:

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THE Wisdom of Mankind has for several Ages been inquiring into the Nature of Man, and the Nature of the World in which he is placed.

The Wants and Miseries of Human Nature, and the Vanity of Worldly Enjoyments, have made it difficult for the wisest Men to tell, what Human Happiness was, or wherein it consisted.

It has pleased the infinite Goodness of God to satisfy our Enquiries, by a Revelation made to the World by his Son **JESUS CHRIST.**

This Revelation has laid open the great Secrets of Providence from the Creation of the World. It has explain'd the present State of Things, and given Man all the Information that is necessary, both to give him Rest here, and to lead him safely to everlasting Happiness.

It is now only necessary that the poor Wisdom of Man do not exalt itself against God, that we suffer our Eyes to be open'd by him that made them, and our Lives to be conducted by him, in whom *we live, move and have our Being.*

As Happiness is the sole End of all our Labours, so this Revelation aims at nothing else.

It gives us right Notions of ourselves, of our true Good and real Evil; it shews us our true Condition, both our Greatness and Meanness, our Happiness and Misery.

Before this, Man was a mere Riddle to himself, and his Condition full of Darkness and Perplexity; a restless Inhabitant of a miserable disorder'd World, *walking in a vain Shadow, and disquieting himself in vain.*

But this Light has dispers'd the Anxiety of his vain Conjectures. It has brought us acquainted with God, and by adding Heaven to Earth, and Eternity to Time, has open'd such a glorious View of Things, as leads Men even in this World, to a *Peace of God which passeth all Understanding.*

This Revelation acquaints us, that our first Father was created after the divine Image, but that by Disobedience he fell from that glorious State in which God had created him, That soon after his Fall, the infinite Mercy of God met with him;

him : That Love which at the first breathed out of the Mouth of God a living, holy and divine Soul into him ; now again breathed a Spark or Seed of divine Light into him, which would in Time do all that which Adam should have done, that is, should raise up, and bring forth a Generation of Men that should become Sons of God, and take possession of the Kingdom promised.

Here now began the merciful Mystery of Man's Redemption ; for this Seed of a divine Life, this inspoken Word of Grace, or Bruiser of the Serpent's Head was the Holy JESUS, the second Adam, who from that Time stood in the Place of the first Man and became the Spiritual Father, and Regenerator of Adam himself and all his Posterity.

The faithful amongst the Antients experienced the effect of this redeeming Power ; it was thro' its Efficacy that *Enoch pleased God and was translated ; Noa was a Preacher of Righteousness ; Abraham walked with God, was called the Friend of God ;* and in Faith *Saw Christ's Day* the Day wherein Christ was to suffer for our Redemption, and was glad ; *Moses chose rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ, greater Riches than the Treasures in Egypt.* It was this reconciling Spirit of Grace and Love that was in the Church in the Wilderness, when the Fathers received the lively Oracles and were led by the Pillars of Cloud by Day, and of Fire by Night.

Thus from the Time of the promised Redeemer, the Effect of Christ's Death was sensibly experienced by the faithful, and from that Time, it may be said in a certain and true Sense, that the Incarnation of the son of God began, because he then entred again into the human Nature, as a Seed, or beginning of its Salvation, hidden under the Veil of the Law and not made manifest till in the Fulness of Time, according to what had been foretold by the Prophets. *Christ the Redeemer of Mankind was born of the Virgin Mary at Bethlehem in the Land of Judea.* And it is in this sense that our blessed Saviour call himself, *The Light of the World,* and that the Apostle says of him. *That he was the true Light which enlighteneth every Man*

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that cometh into the World; because every Man whereever
born, has from him this Light of Life, this Inward Saviour
or seed of his salvation, which if not stifled, but revered
and obeyed, will give to as many as receive it power to be-
come the sons of God, here as the Apostle declares, *The Mys-
tery that had been hid from Ages and Generations, now is made
manifest to his saints, which is Christ in you the hope of
Glory.*

Hence it appears, that we are in a fallen
Condition, utterly unable to help or redeem ourselves,
but that help is lay'd on JESUS CHRIST our Saviour, who
is mighty to save, even to the uttermost; That the Body
in which we are placed is as our Grave or Sepulcher,
where we are instaved to fleshly Thoughts, blinded by false
Notions of Good and Evil, and dead to all Taste of true
Happiness; And that there is no Sanctification of Heart,
no Illumination of the Mind, no Knowledge of divine
Mysteries, no Love of holy Things possible to be had, but
in, and by the Motion and Life of this holy Spirit renewed,
or born again in us, and that its Life, Motion, and Power
in us increaseth according to our Faith, Prayers and Desire
after it.

Revelation farther teaches us, that the World in
which we live, is also in a disorder'd, irregular State, and cur-
sed for the Sake of Man; that it is no longer the Paradise that
God made it, but the Remains of drown'd World, full of
Marks of God's Displeasure, and the Sin of its Inhabitants.

That it is a mere Wilderness, a State of Darkness, a Vale
of Misery, where Vice and Madness, Dreams and Shadows,
variously please & torment the short, miserable Lives of Men

Devils also and Evil Spirits have here their Residence,
promoting the Works of Darkness, and wandering up and
down, seeking whom they may devour.

So that Man, in his natural State, is like a Person sick of
Variety of Diseases, knowing neither his Distempers nor his
Cure, & inclosed in a Place where he can hear or see, or feel,
or taste of nothing but what tends to enflame his Disorders.

But Christianity puts an End to this State of Things,
blots out all the Ideas of worldly Wisdom, brings the World
itself to Ashes, and creates all anew. It calls Man from an
animal

animal Life, and earthly societies to be born again of the Holy Ghost, and be made a Member of the Kingdom of God.

It crushes into Nothing the Concerns of this Life, condemns it as a State of Vanity and Darkness, and leads Man to a Happiness with God in the Realms of Light.

It proposes the purifying of our Souls, enliven'd with the Divine Spirit; It sets before us new Goods and Evils, and forms to a glorious Participation of the Divine Nature.

This is the one End of Christianity. It does not leave us to grovel on in the Desires of the Flesh, to cast about for worldly Happiness, and wander in Darkness and Exile from God: But the sole Design of it is, to lead us from all Thoughts of rest here, to separate us from worldly Tempers, to deliver us from the Folly of our Passions, the Slavery of our own Natures, the Power of evil Spirits, and unite us to God, the true Fountain of real Good. This is the mighty Change which Christianity aims at, to reform our whole Natures, renew our Souls in the Image of God, and make them the Inhabitants of Heavenly and Immortal Bodies.

The Manner by which it changes our whole State is equally great and wonderful.

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, saith our blessed Lord, no Man cometh unto the Father but by me.

As all Things were created by the Son of God, and without him was not any thing made that was made, so are all things redeemed and restored by the same Divine Person.

As nothing could come into Being without him, so nothing can enter into a State of Happiness but by him.

The Dignity of this Redemption at once confounds the Pride, and relieves the Misery of Man. How fallen must he be from God, that should need so great a Mediator! And on the other Hand, how full of Comfort is the Thought that so high a Methode, so stupendous a Means should be taken to restore him to a State of Peace and Favour with God.

This is the true Point of View, in which every Christian is to behold himself. He is to overlook the poor Projects of this Life, and consider himself as a Creature thro' his natural Corruption falling into a State of endless Misery; but by the Mercy of God redeem'd to a Condition of everlasting Happiness.

All the Precepts and Doctrines of the Gospel are founded

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on these two great Truths, the deplorable Corruption of human Nature, and it's new Birth in CHRIST JESUS.

The one includes all the Misery, the other all the Happiness of Man,

It is on these, that the whole Frame of Christianity is built, forbidding only such Things as fasten us to the Disorders of Sin, commanding only those Duties which lead us into the Liberty of the Sons of God.

So that if we think and act as Christians, we act suitably to these Terms of our Condition, fearing and avoiding all the Motions of our Corrupted Nature, cherishing the Secret Inspirations of the Holy Spirit, opening our Minds for the Reception of the Divine Light, and pressing after all the Perfections of our New Birth.

All Christians are continually to behave themselves conformably to this double Capacity. We are to Fear, and Watch and Pray, like Men that are always on the Brink of Eternal Death: and to believe, hope, labour and aspire, like Christians that are called to Fight the good Fight of Faith, and lay hold on eternal Life.

This Knowledge of ourselves makes Human Life a State of infinite Importance, placed upon so dreadful a Point betwixt two such Extremities.

Well might our Saviour say to one that begg'd first to go and bury his Father, *Follow me, and let the Dead bury their Dead,*

For what is all the Bustle and Hurry of the World but dead Shew, and its greatest Actors but dead Men, when compared with that real Life to which the Followers of CHRIST are redeem'd?

Had we been made only for this World, worldly Wisdom had been our highest Wisdom; but seeing we are redeemed to an intirely contrary State, worldly Wisdom is now our greatest Foolishness.

It is now our only Wisdom, to understand our new State, and conduct ourselves by the Principles of our Redemption.

The Nature of our Christian Calling is of that Concern, as to deserve all our Thoughts, and is indeed only to be perceived by great Seriousness and Attention of Mind.

The Christian State is an invisible Life in the Spirit of
GOD,

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GOD, supported not by sensible Goods, but the Spiritual Graces of Faith and Hope: So that Man busied in Earthly Cares and Enjoyments, perceives nothing of this great and Heavenly Calling.

The Changes which Christianity maketh in the present State of Things, are all invisible: Its Goods and Evils, which are the only true Standards of our Actions, are not subject to the Knowledge of our Senses,

In GOD, *we live and move and have our Being*; but how unseen, how unfelt is all this!

CHRIST is the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World, the true Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End of all Things. The whole Creation subsists in him and by him. No Person is in any Favour with God, but by this great Mediator. But how invisible, how unknown to all our Senses is this State of Things!

Christians are Temples of the Holy Ghost, consecrated to God, Members of Christ's mystical Body, of his flesh and his Bones receiving Life, Spirit and Motion, from him their Head,

But our Senses see no farther than our Parents and Kindred according to the Flesh, and fix our Hearts to earthly Friendships and Relations. Well then may this Life be deem'd a State of Darkness, since it thus clouds and covers all the true Appearances of Things, and keeps our Minds insensible and unaffected with Matters of such infinite Moment.

Wou'd we therefore know our true Condition, we must search after *a Life that is hid with Christ in God*. We must consider ourselves as Parts of Christ's mystical Body, and as Members of the Kingdom of Heaven. In vain do we consider the Beauty and Strength of our Bodies, our Alliances with Men, and the Distinctions of this World; for these Things no more constitute the State of Human Life, than rich *Cassins* or beautiful *Monuments* constitute the State of the Dead.

We justly pity the last poor Efforts of human Greatness when we see a breathless Carcase lying in *State*. It appears so far from any real Honour, that it rather looks like ridiculing the Misery of our Nature. But were Religion to form our Judgments, the Life of a proud, voluptuous sen-

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Tual Man, tho' shining in all the Splendour of the World, would give us no higher an Idea of human Dignity, than a poor Corpse laid in State.

For a Sinner, when glorying in the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, is a more shocking Sight of Misery ridicul'd, than any Pageantry that can expose the Dead.

We have an Apostle's Authority to say, that *he who liveth in Pleasure is dead whilst he liveth.*

This shews us, that when we enquire what our Life is, we must think of something higher than the Vigour of our Blood, the Gaity of our Spirits, or the Enjoyment of sensual Pleasures: Since these, tho' the allowed Signs of living Men, are often undeniable Proofs of dead Christians.

When therefore we would truly know what our Life or Happiness is, we must look at nothing that is sensible or temporal. We may as well dig in the Earth for Wisdom as look at Flesh and Blood to see what we are, or at worldly Enjoyments to find what we want, or at temporal Evils, to see what we have to fear.

Our Blessed Saviour put an absolute End to all Enquiries of this Kind when he said, *Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do.*

Here our Bodies and all bodily Enjoyments are at one Dash struck out of the Account of Happiness, and the present State of Things made so very low and insignificant, that he who can only deprive us of them, has not Power enough to deserve our Fear.

We must therefore, if we would conceive our true State, our real Good and Evil, look farther than these dim Eyes of Flesh can carry our Views. We must with the Eyes of Faith, penetrate into the invisible World, the World of Spirits, and consider our Order and Condition among them; a World which, as St. John speaks, *hath no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon, to shine in it; for the Glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.* For it is there, among eternal Beings, that we must take an eternal Fellowship, or fall into a Kingdom of Darkness & everlasting Misery.

Christianity is so noble in its Ends, so extensive in its Views, that it has no less subjects than these to entertain our Thoughts.

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It buries our Bodies, burns the present World, triumphs over Death by a general Resurrection, and opens all into an eternal state.

It never considers us in any other Respect than as fallen Spirits, it disregards worldly Distinctions, and proposes nothing to our Fears but eternal Misery nothing to our Hopes but an endless Enjoyment of God.

This is the great the important Condition, in which Christianity has placed us, above our Bodies, above the World, above Death, to be present at the Dissolution of all Things, to see the Earth in Flames, and the Heavens wrapt up like a Scroll, to stand at the general Resurrection to appear at the universal Judgment, and to live for ever, when all that our Eyes have seen is passed away and gone.

Take therefore upon thee a Temper suitable to this Greatness of thy Condition. Remember that thou art an eternal Spirit, that thou art but for a few Months or Years in a State of Flesh and Blood, only to try, whether thou shalt be for ever happy with God, or for ever miserable with the Devil.

Thou wilt hear of other Concerns and other Greatness in this World. Thou wilt see every Order of Men, every Family, every Person pursuing some fancied Happiness, as if the World had not only Happiness, but a particular Kind of Happiness for all its Inhabitants.

But when thou seest this, fancy thou sawest all the World asleep, the Prince no longer a Prince, the Beggar no longer begging, but every Man sleeping out of his proper State; some happy, others tormented, and all changing their Condition, as fast as one foolish Dream could succeed another.

When thou hast seen this, if thou wilt, thou mayst go to sleep too, thou mayst lie down and dream. And this is all; for be as happy as the World can make these, all is but sleeping and dreaming: And what is still worse, it is like sleeping in a Ship, when thou shouldst be pumping for Life, or dreaming thou art a Prince, when thou shouldst be redeeming thyself from Slavery.

This is no imaginary Flight of a melancholy Fancy, but the real Nature of Things.

For if thou art that immortal Nature, that fallen Spirit which Religion teaches us; if thou art to meet Death, Resurrection

and Judgment, as the Forerunners of an eternal State; what are all the little Flashes of Pleasure, the changing Appearances of worldly Happiness, but so many Sorts of Dreams?

How canst thou talk of the Advantages of Fortune, the Pleasures of Food or Apparel, without being in a Dream?

For if it be true, that Man is upon his Trial, if the Trial is for Eternity, if Life is but a Vapour; what is there that deserves a serious Thought, but how to get well out of the World, and make it a right Passage to our eternal State.

It is the Manner of some Countries, in the Burial of their Dead, to put a Staff and Shoes and Money in the Sepulcher along with the Corpse.

We see the Folly and Ignorance of such a poor Contrivance to assist the Dead; But if we did but understand what is Life, we should see as much Folly in the poor Contrivances to assist the Living.

For how many Things do People labour after, break their Rest and Peace to get, which yet when gotten are of just as much real Use to them, as a Staff and Shoes to a Corpse under Ground? They are always adding something to their Life, which is only like adding another Pair of Shoes to a Body in the Grave.

Thou mayst hire more Servants, new paint thy Rooms, and put on richer Apparel: And these will help thee to be happy, as *golden Staves* or *painted Shoes* will help a dead Man to walk.

If thou remembrest, that the whole Race of Mankind are a Race of fallen Spirits, that pass thro' this World, as an Arrow passeth thro' the Air; thou wilt soon perceive, that there is no Wisdom or Happiness, but in getting away to the best Advantage.

If thou remembrest, that this Life is but a Vapour, that thou art in the Body, only to be holy, humble and heavenly minded; that thou standest upon the Brink of Death, Resurrection and Judgment, and that these great Things will suddenly come upon thee like a Thief in the Night; thou wilt see a Vanity in the Things of this World; greater than any Words can express.

Do but therefore know thyself as Religion hath made thee known; do but see thyself in the Light which Christ has brought into the World, and then thou wilt see that nothing

nothing concerns thee, but what concerns an everlasting Spirit that is going to God; and that there are no Enjoyments here that are worth a Thought, but such as may adorn thee with that Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord.

This is the End of Christianity. It is not a School for the teaching of moral Virtue. It is deeper and more divine in its Designs: It implies an entire Change of Heart, a full Dedication of ourselves, our Souls and Bodies unto God.

Our Blessed Saviour came into the World, not to make any Composition with it, but to put an End to the Designs of Flesh and Blood, and to shew us, we must either renounce this World to become Sons of God, or by enjoying it, take our Portion among damned Spirits.

Christianity is a State of Things that wholly regards Eternity: It knows of no other Goods and Evils, but such as relate to another Life.

It is a Kingdom of Heaven that has no other Interests in this World, than as it takes its Members out of it: And when the Number of the Elect is compleat, this World will be consumed with Fire, as having no other Reason for its Existence, than the furnishing Members for that blessed Society, which is to last for ever.

I cannot here omit observing the folly of human Wisdom, which, full of imaginary Projects, pleases itself with its lasting Establishments in a World doomed to Destruction, and which is to last no longer than till a sufficient Number is redeem'd out of it.

Did we see a Number of Animals hastening to take up their Apartments, and contending for the best Places in a Building that was to be beat down as soon as its old Inhabitants were got safe out, we should see a Contention full as wise as the Wisdom of Worldly Ambition.

That Christianity requires a Change of Nature, is plain from the whole Tenor of the Gospel.

The Saviour of the World saith, *that except a Man be born again of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* We are told, that to as many as received him, to them he gave Power to become the Sons of God; which were born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.

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These Words plainly teach us, that Christianity implies an entire Change of Nature; that as our Birth was to us the beginning of a new Life, and brought us into a Society of earthly Enjoyments, so Christianity is another Birth, that brings us into a Condition altogether as new as when we first saw the Light.

We begin again to be, we enter upon fresh Terms of Life, have new Tempers, new Hopes, and Fears, and an entire Change of every thing that can be called Good or Evil.

This New Birth is the very Essence and Soul of Christianity; it is the Seal of the promises, the Mark of our Sonship, the Earnest of our Inheritance, and the sure Proof of our Acceptance with God.

If we would know, what a Change our New Life in Christ implies, let us consider, what it is to be born of God.

Whosoever is born of God, saith the Apostle, doth not commit Sin. For his Seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of GOD. In this the Children of GOD are manifested, and the Children of the Devil. And again, We know, that whosoever is born of GOD sinneth not, but he that is begotten of GOD keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not. 1 John iii, 10, 18.

The same Apostle tells us, *Whosoever is born of GOD overcometh the World.* He overcometh all worldly Desires and worldly Fears. He is crucified unto the World and the World crucified unto him. He is dead to the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life. And he feareth not them that can kill the Body, and after that have nothing more that they can do.

We must therefore examine into the State of our Minds, and see whether we are thus changed in our Natures, thus born again: Whether we are so spiritual, as to have overcome the World; so holy, as that we cannot commit Sin; since it is the undeniable Doctrine of Scripture, that this New Birth is as necessary to Salvation, as the Believing in JESUS CHRIST.

We have seen two Marks of those that are born of God. A third is given us by Christ himself. *Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you: that*

That ye may be Children of your Father which is in Heaven.
Matth. v, 44.

Well may a Christian be said to be a *new Creature*, since without such a Disposition as this, we cannot be Christians, or Children of our Father which is in Heaven.

It is not therefore enough to love our Friends, Benefactors, and relations, but if we are born of God, we love like God: We have an universal Love, a Tenderness for all Mankind, imitating that Love which would that *all Men should be saved.*

God is Love: And as he who dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, so he that dwelleth not in Love dwelleth not in God.

It is impossible to be a true Christian, and an Enemy at the same Time.

Mankind hath no Enemy but the Devil; and those who are of the same Spirit.

There is perhaps no Duty more contrary to Flesh and Blood than this. But it is easy to those that are born of God.

For take but away earthly Goods and Evils, and you take away all Hatred and Malice. For they are the only Causes of those base Tempers.

He therefore that *bath overcome the World*, hath overcome all the Occasions of Envy and ill Nature, and can pity, pray for and forgive all his Enemies, who want less Forgiveness from Him than He has received from his Heavenly Father.

Let us here a while contemplate the Height and Depth of Christian Holiness, and that Godlike Spirit which it implies! And this alone might convince us, that to be Christians, we must be born again: We must so change our very Natures, as to have no Desire in our Souls, but that of being like God.

And till we rejoice and delight only in God, we cannot have this Love to our Fellow Creatures.

We may therefore learn from this, as well as from what was observed before, that Christianity does not consist in doing no Harm, nor in doing Good, (as it is called) nor yet in any particular moral Virtues, as some idly suppose: But in an entire Change of our Hearts, of all our natural Tempers, and a Life wholly devoted to God.

The same Doctrine is farther taught by our blessed Saviour,

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labour, when speaking of the little Children, he saith, *Suffer them to come unto me; for of such is the Kingdom of God.* Luke xviii. 16.

If we are not resolved to deceive ourselves, if we have not Eyes that see not, and Ears that hear not, we must perceive that these Words imply some mighty Change in our Nature.

Now the peculiar Condition of Infants is such, that they have every thing to learn; they are to be taught by others, what they are to hope and fear, and wherein their proper Happiness consists.

And in this Sense first are we to become as little Children, to be as tho' we had every thing to learn, and suffer our selves to be taught, what we are to chuse, and what we are to avoid; to pretend to no Wisdom of our own, but be ready to be taught of GOD, the only Way of pursuing that only Happiness, which GOD in CHRIST proposes to us; and to accept it with such Simplicity of Mind as little Children who have nothing of their own to oppose to it.

But now is this infant Temper thus essential to Christianity? Does the Kingdom of God consist only of those that have it? This then is another undeniable Proof that Christianity implies a *new Nature*; such as having renounced the Prejudices of Life, the Maxims of human Wisdom, gives itself with a Child-like Submission and Simplicity, to be entirely govern'd by the Doctrines and Spirit of CHRIST.

Craft and Policy, selfish Cunning, proud Abilities and vain Endowments, have no Admittance into this holy State of Society with CHRIST in GOD.

The Wisdom of this World, the Intrigues of Life, the Designs of greatness and Ambition, lead to another Kingdom. He that follows CHRIST must be emptied of this vain Furniture, and put on the meek Ornament of infant and undesigning Simplicity.

Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this World? Hath not GOD made foolish the Wisdom of this World?

If we will partake of the *Wisdom of GOD*, we must judge of *this World* and its most boasted Gifts, as the
Wisdom

Wisdom of GOD judgeth of them; we must deem them *Foolishness*, and with undivided Hearts labour after *one Wisdom, one Happiness, in being entirely devoted to GOD.*

A Christian is sober, not only so far as suits with a regular Life, but so as become one who is born of the Holy Spirit, that is one with CHRIST, who dwelleth in GOD and GOD in him.

He is Charitable, not only so far as suits with his natural Temper, and with good Esteem among Men; but in such a Measure, as is suitable to the Doctrines and Spirit of the Gospel.

For indeed, neither Charity, nor Temperance nor Justice, nor any other Virtues (as they are called) are Parts of Christian Holiness, till they spring from Holiness of Heart, from the Mind that was in CHRIST.

This is what cannot be too much consider'd by those whose Religion has made no Change in their Hearts; who fancy themselves Christians, only because of the Regularity of their Lives, altho' they have never experienced a Renewal in the Spirit of their Minds, after the Image of Him that created them; who pray without Devotion, give Alms without Charity, and are Christians without the Spirit of Christianity.

It is a miserable Error, to think we are Christians because we are less vain or covetous, more sober and decent in our Behaviour than we used to be. Yet this is the Case with many, who think they are well, because they are not so bad as they were, because they are reformed from Outward Wickedness; not considering how thorough a Change, how entire a Reformation of Heart as well as Life Christianity implies.

But let such People remember, that they who thus measure themselves by themselves are not wise. Let them remember that they are not Disciples of CHRIST, till they have, like him, offer'd their whole Soul and Body as a reasonable, living Sacrifice to GOD; that they are not Members of CHRIST's Mystical Body, till they are united unto him by a new Spirit; that they have not enter'd into the Kingdom of GOD, till they have enter'd into an infant Simplicity of Heart till they are so born of GOD as not to commit Sin, so full of an heavenly Spirit as to have overcome the World. Let

Let them remember, *He that is in CHRIST is a new Creature*, and that nothing short of this will avail before GOD, nothing less than the entire Renewal of the Soul in Righteousness and all true Holiness. Let them remember, that there is no Religion that will stand us in any Stead, but that which is the Conversion of the Heart to GOD, when all our Tempers are holy, heavenly, divine, springing from a Soul that is *born again* of the Spirit, that is full of divine Love, and tends with one full Bent to a Perfection and Happiness in the Enjoyment of God.

Let us therefore look carefully to ourselves, and consider what manner of Spirit we are of; Let us not think our Condition safe, because we are of this or that Church or Persuasion, or because we are strict Observers of the Outward Offices of Religion. For we can't but see, these are Marks that belong to more than belong to CHRIST. All are not his, that *prophecy*, or even *cast out Devils*, and *work Miracles in his Name*. Much less those who with corrupt Minds and worldly Hearts, are only *baptiz'd in his Name*.

If Religion has rais'd us into a *new World*; if it has fill'd us with *new Ends* of Life; if it has taken Possession of our Hearts, alter'd the whole Turn of our Minds, and changed the whole Stream of our Affections; if it has given us *new Joys and Grievs*, *new Hopes and Fears*; if all Things in us are become new; if *the Love of GOD is shed abroad in our Hearts*, by the Holy Ghost given unto us, and this Spirit beareth Witness with our Spirit that we are the Children of GOD: Then are we Christians, not in Name only, but in Truth; then we do believe in the Holy JESUS, and we shall *rejoice in the Day of CHRIST*, that we have not run in vain, neither labour'd in vain.

FINIS.